

Senior Job Search

The most important tip we can offer is to **START EARLY**. The earlier you begin, the more opportunities you will have. Students who understand the realities and requirements of jobs, and the breadth of opportunities available will be ahead of the game.

Assessing Yourself - Job Search Readiness

Before contacting employers, you should do your homework and be well prepared to communicate your job search objective, your skills and qualifications and how these relate to particular employers. Your responses to the following questions will provide an assessment of your job search readiness and point you toward some helpful resources.

How Much Do You Know About Yourself?

Can you...

- Clearly articulate what you have learned during your college preparation as it relates to the type of job you are seeking?
- Explain the reasons you selected your major and minor?
- Identify and describe your greatest strengths?
- Recall prior experiences and activities and list five things you did well? Five things you enjoyed most? Five things you learned?
- Describe prior experiences and activities in terms of transferable skills?
- Prioritize your top five work related values?
- Describe your ideal work environment including the characteristics that would make you happiest and most productive?
- Clearly state your career goals?
- Explain the contributions you expect to make to a prospective employer?
- Identify your geographical preferences and limitations?

If you answered "no," you would most likely benefit from individual career advising. The most appealing candidates are those who are knowledgeable about who they are and can effectively present themselves to potential employers. Clear and confident answers to the above questions are essential in conducting a successful job search.

How Much Do You Know About the World of Work?

Can you...

- List 5 employment fields that would match your qualifications and interests?
- Identify the types of organizations that employ people in these positions/fields?
- Name at least 10 organizations that you plan to contact regarding employment opportunities?
- Discuss the structure, services, programs or products of the organizations you plan to contact?
- State reasons for your interest in each of these organizations?

If you answered "no," you should learn more about the world of work before proceeding with your job search. By doing so, you will be able to identify opportunities that most closely match your qualifications and interests.

Are You Ready to Contact Employers?

Have you...

- Prepared a résumé that accurately reflects your knowledge, experience and accomplishments?
- Had your résumé critiqued in Career Services?
- Learned how to write a cover letter, follow up letter, and thank you letter?
- Determined the salary range for people with positions you are considering?
- Prepared to answer the questions employers are likely to ask you in an interview?
- Developed an action plan with timeframes to implement your job search?
- Developed a record-keeping system to enable you to keep track of your job search?
- Identified several relatives, friends or other acquaintances who might know of jobs in your field?

Career Advisors are available to provide individual feedback on résumés and job search letters and to provide guidance on the job search strategy and interview process.

The Job Search Process

Know Your Objective and the Employers Out There

The most important step in the job search is identifying what kind of job you want and what you have to offer an employer. Employers are most interested in individuals who have focused their career interests. To know what job you want, you should:

- Identify and be prepared to discuss your interests, skills, experiences, knowledge, and attributes. If you need assistance in clarifying your objective, we recommend that you make an appointment with a career advisor.
- Identify and research occupations, work environments, and employers of interest. This can be done through informational interviews, online research, and Career Services resources. You should learn about the tasks and responsibilities involved in the job, salary you might expect, and the training required. You can also learn where and how people obtain entry-level positions, what skills and information are important on a resume, and how various work settings differ. Finally, you can learn about the typical employers who hire people with your background, what they are looking for in candidates, and how to reach them effectively.

Prepare Your Job Search Tools

Effectively promoting your skills and experiences will catch the attention of employers. That communication might take the form of résumé or cover letters, information interviews, networking, or telephone calls. You must express why you are interested in that employer and position and why you believe you are qualified for the job.

Please refer to the [Résumé Writing, Cover Letter and Interviewing](#) guides on the Career Services website for a discussion of tips and examples. You might also want to attend one of the many workshops offered by Career Services each semester (see insert pages.) or speak with a Career Advisor.

Learn About & Use Various Job Search Strategies

There are many ways to come in contact with employers who would be in the market to hire someone with your interests, skills and experience. To locate employers you will want to consider networking and information interviewing, researching employers through a variety of on-line resources, and more. Presented in the chart on the next page are some of the most popular methods of looking for a job, as well as helpful tips, benefits and challenges. Following the chart are some expanded explanations of some of the job search methods.

Follow Up

Following up after making that initial contact with an organization is something most jobseekers are reluctant to do. Many feel as if they are pestering the employer. Actually the person who gets the job is frequently the one who makes two, three, four, or more follow-up calls. If you feel uncomfortable calling back, you could ask, "Is it okay if I call back in two weeks to check again?" This persistence demonstrates your enthusiasm, interest, and professional skills.

Maintain an Organizational System

An organizational record keeping system is a crucial aspect of the job search. It will help you keep track of your network of contacts, dates and follow up information, and job search goals.

Have a system to record and organize the following:

- Names, dates, and times of informational interviews.
- Job advertisements for jobs applied for.
- Dates you applied for jobs and when to make follow up contact.
- Names, dates, and times of job interviews.
- Names of people to network with.
- Dates of follow up contacts made.
- Daily, weekly, and monthly goals.
- Rewards you give yourself for reaching your goals.

Which organizational system you choose is up to you. There are many methods and various aspects of a job search to organize. Many books in the Office of Career Services Library provide suggested forms and techniques to organize your search.

Keep at it...

Even for highly qualified people, rejection and disappointment are part of the job search process. You might need to look at the amount of time you are spending on job search activities to determine if you are doing enough. You might also need to reassess your job objectives—are they focused enough? Are you following up on leads? Are your résumés and cover letters tailored to the positions you are seeking? Are your interview skills strong enough? Remember, Career Services is here to assist you. But, you are the one who has to actively put the information to work. Never underestimate the amount of time necessary to find the very best position. You have invested a large amount of time and energy in your education. Now, as the payoff nears, do not fall short in this, the all-important final lap.

Job Search Strategies

Networking

Employers and job seekers alike affirm that networking is the most powerful tool you can use to find a job. Many opportunities (as many as 75% or more) never get listed anywhere. They are filled by candidates known by the employer – often through networking contacts. Networking puts you in touch with people (alumni, friends, family) who have the ability to:

- Provide you with insights about a career field, specific kinds of employers and their needs, and the realities of employment beyond what you learn in the classroom or from printed resources
- Refer you to other people who can also be helpful
- Ideally, connect you with information about a job opportunity

Networking is about getting information that can help you with your search. Networking is time intensive and requires planning, follow-up, and thank-you cards/emails. You are the one responsible for finding your job, but you can gather information, advice, and leads that might help you. Review the [Networking and Informational Interviewing Guide](#) on the Career Services website and meet with a career advisor to talk about the intricacies of networking and strategize about your next move.

Identify & Contact Prospective Employers

Another job search strategy is to identify prospective employers by field of interest and/or geographic area. Generate a list of employers who interest you and work from that list. Research the organizations – go to the employer’s web site, conduct informational interviews with people who work there or are in the industry and read articles on the Internet that are relevant to the specific employer or the industry in general. Then call the employer directly to inquire about employment possibilities. Ask for the name of the person who should receive your resume. This person could be the head of a department, someone in Human Resources or the direct supervisor for the open position. Write a targeted cover letter and resume, and follow up with a phone call one week later. Use resources such as Vault on the Career Services website and Idealist.org.

Identify Advertised Job Position Openings

Surveys indicate that advertised openings represent at most 15-20% of all jobs available. Even though these positions represent a small portion of opportunities they are easiest to identify and therefore the most responded to by jobseekers. While it is still worthwhile to pursue these openings, it is recommended that you spend only 5-20% of your job search time focusing on them.

Job postings can be found through the resources available on the “Jobs” section of the Career Service website. Particular resources of note include Spotlight on Careers and Idealist.org.

Career Services Programs & Services

Regional Interview Days

Regional Interview Days are organized through the Selective Liberal Arts Consortium (SLAC) of which Oberlin College is a member. The interview days are held each December in Chicago and each January in Boston, New York, and Washington DC. Students interview for a variety of jobs all in one location in each city. Students apply in October and employers make interview selections in November. Selected students travel to the employer’s city for the interview day. Look on the Office of Career Services webpage for more information about this event.

Coast-to-Coast Virtual Career Fair

The Coast-to-Coast Virtual Career Fair takes place online in the spring semester and is designed for employers interested in liberal arts students. Students apply for positions through an online job and internship posting system and employers arrange telephone or face-to-face interviews with selected candidates.

Employers Visiting Campus

Each year a number of employers visit campus to conduct information sessions or interviews. Past employers include the Peace Corps, Americorps, Carney Sandoe & Associates (a private school teacher recruiting firm) and ACORN. Visit the Office of Career Services events calendar for more information on upcoming visits.

ObieOpps, UCAN & LACN

Job postings are always listed in ObieOpps. ObieOpps is our online, comprehensive recruiting management system. By logging into ObieOpps, you are able to search for jobs and employers that might interest you. Through ObieOpps you also have access to two additional job and internship posting sites called the University Career Action Network (UCAN) and the Liberal Arts Career Network (LACN). UCAN and LACN will provide you with access to thousands of additional opportunities.